



The Great Gatsby

Chapters 3 and 4

Why is he called "The Great Gatsby"?



Chapter III



Party #3 – this one at Gatsby's



Setting: Gatsby's Mansion

- ◉ West Egg
- ◉ “In his blue gardens men and girls came and went like moths ...”
- ◉ “...his station wagon scampered like a brisk yellow bug to meet all trains...”
- ◉ “Every Friday five crates of oranges and lemons arrived – every Monday these same oranges and lemons left in a pyramid of pulpless halves”

A juicer!

- “There was a machine in the kitchen which could extract the juice of two hundred oranges in half an hour if a little button was pressed two hundred times by a butler’s thumb.” – Ironic
- Caterers with colored lights – “to make a Christmas tree of Gatsby’s enormous garden”

Like an amusement park?

- ◉ Many “events” going on
- ◉ In many places
- ◉ Many things to do
- ◉ Many food and drink items
- ◉ Many people do not know each other
- ◉ No one needs an invitation
- ◉ No one knows the host
- ◉ “I never care what I do, so I always have a good time.”



Fact vs. Rumor

- “He doesn’t want any trouble with *anybody*” “doesn’t?” “Gatsby. Somebody told me –”
- “Somebody told me they thought he killed a man once.”
- “It’s more that he was a German spy during the war.”
- “I heard that from a man who knew all about him, grew up with him in Germany.”



Let's go meet the host

- ◉ “Let's get out ... this is much too polite for me.”
- ◉ Bar was crowded, but no Gatsby
- ◉ Not at the top of the steps, not on the veranda
- ◉ Walked into high Gothic library



Owl Eyes: “They’re real”

- “What do you think?”
- “Absolutely real – have pages and everything.”
- Upper class usually stocked library with hollow books
- Reinforces theme of hollowness, empty spiritual core
- Owl Eyes : one of the few to really see and maybe even understand Gatsby

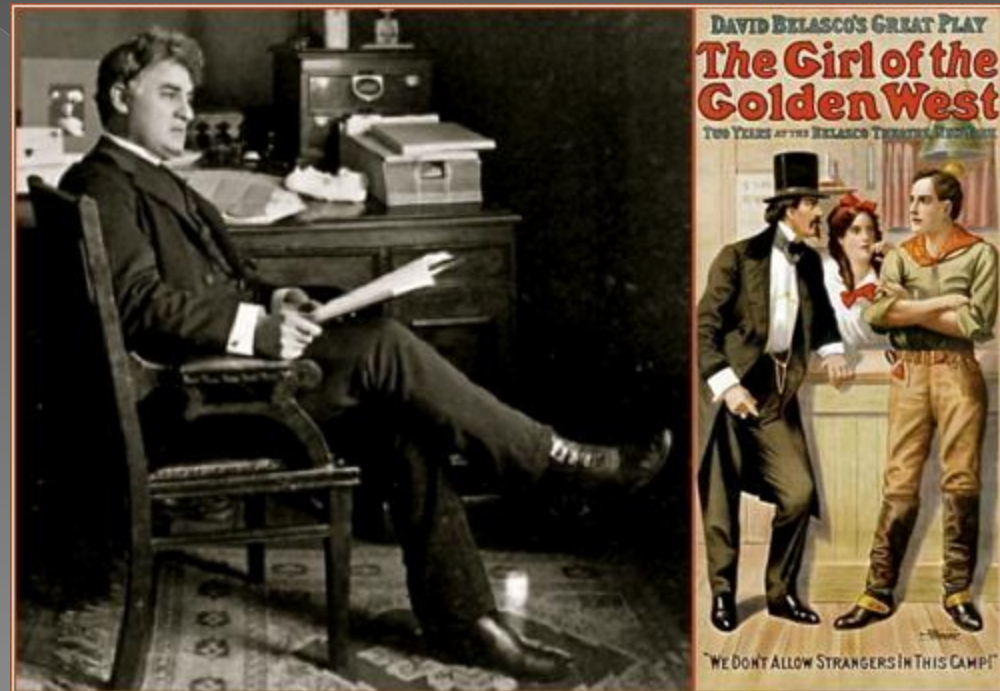
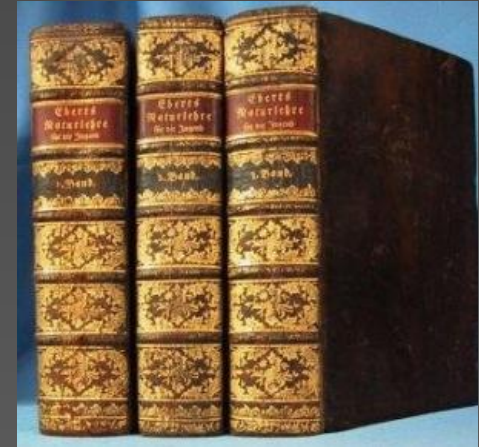
Who IS Owl Eyes?

- A very minor character in this book is Doctor Webster Civet, whose hands apparently shake. One character says that he met a woman named Mrs. Claud Roosevelt after he takes down Volume One of the “Stoddard Lectures” from a bookcase and expresses surprise that it is a real book. That character is a drunk dubbed Owl Eyes, while Ewing Klipspringer is a boarder who plays “The Love Nest” on the piano.



“...a regular Belasco”

- “This fella’s a regular Belasco. It’s a triumph.” For whom?
- “What thoroughness! What realism! Knew when to stop, too – didn’t cut the pages.”
- David Belasco:
Theatrical producer,
playwright
- How were Gatsby’s
house, garden, and
parties also “theatrical
affairs”?



Champagne



- ◉ Celebrated tenor singing in Italian
- ◉ Notorious contralto singing jazz
- ◉ People doing “stunts” all over the garden
- ◉ Vacuous bursts of laughter
- ◉ Stage twins performed a baby act in costume
- ◉ And champagne served in glasses bigger than finger-bowls



Gatsby appears

- “Your face is familiar ... Weren't you in the Third Division during the War?”
- “Why, yes. I was in the Ninth Machine-Gun Battalion.”
- “I knew I'd seen you somewhere before.”
- “Want to go with me, old sport?”

Gatsby's smile

- ◉ Smiled understandingly
- ◉ Rare smile with a “quality of eternal reassurance in it”
- ◉ “Faced the whole world for an instant, and then focused on you with an irresistible prejudice in your favor.”
- ◉ “It understood you as far as you wanted to be understood.”





Chicago is calling

- New York vs. Chicago?
- East vs. West?
- Chicago was notorious for its crime and corruption
- Then, we learn he was “an Oxford man”



Stands alone ...

- ◉ “Gatsby [stands] alone on the marble steps and [looks] from one group to another with approving eyes.
- ◉ “...he was not drinking”
- ◉ Does not seem to belong to the world he has created
- ◉ Untouched by the corruption of the world?



Party degenerates ...

- ◉ Women fighting with their husbands over whether to leave or to stay
- ◉ Some wives are lifted, kicking and screaming, into their cars
- ◉ Gatsby's manner becomes very formal, tightens abruptly
- ◉ And Jordan confides in Nick ...
- ◉ Then the phone calls Gatsby away ... at 2:00 a.m.



Bad drivers ...



- Owl Eyes' car is "in the ditch beside the road, right side up, but violently shorn of one wheel"
- Foreshadowing: "Well, if you're a poor driver, you oughtn't to try driving at night." "But I wasn't even trying ... I wasn't even trying"
- "You're lucky! ... A bad driver and not even trying!"

All Nick does is party?

- ◉ “Most of the time I worked.”
- ◉ “In the early morning the sun threw my shadow westward...”
- ◉ Took dinner at the Yale Club – and “then I went upstairs to the library and studied investments and securities for a conscientious hour.”
- ◉ But ...

“I began to like New York”



Is Nick becoming as hollow as the characters he has been describing?

“Racy, adventurous,” “constant flicker of men and women,” “restless eye,” “pick out romantic women from the crowd.”

“Sometimes, in my mind, I followed them to their apartments”

“At the enchanted metropolitan twilight I felt a haunting loneliness”



Lost, then found Jordan Baker

- ◉ Found her again in midsummer
- ◉ Felt flattered to go places with her; everyone knew her name
- ◉ “I felt a tender curiosity.”
- ◉ “the bored, haughty face”
- ◉ “She was incurably dishonest”
 - Borrowed a car, left top down, rain, lied
 - Suggestion that she lied at first big golf tournament

“It made no difference to me”

- ◉ Is this the kind of woman we would expect Nick to like?
- ◉ Nick calls her “careless,” especially about her driving (more foreshadowing?)
- ◉ Jordan: “I hate careless people. That’s why I like you.”
- ◉ Nick: “I am one of the few honest people that I have ever known.”

Nick: Astute observer?

- ◉ Is Nick guilty of applying a double standard?
- ◉ Is he saying it's OK for women to lie because they can't help it?
- ◉ How do we reconcile our view of Nick as a reliable narrator when he allows himself to get involved with such a morally unattractive woman?
- ◉ Nick = desperately honest; reliable, credible narrator, astute observer of humanity



Chapter IV



Begin with list of partygoers



List gives air of reality

- ◉ Names seem to come from social registers, movie magazines, businessmen's directories, club rosters
- ◉ Names seem to indicate (humorously) that many guests had no background and belong to a vulgar crowd of self-made men hungering for success
- ◉ Also, list seems to make fun of technique used in epics (*Iliad*, *Odyssey*) giving list of warriors' names

Finally, the action begins

- ◉ “Old Sport ... I thought we’d ride up together”
- ◉ Car: cream (i.e. white mixed with gold)
- ◉ Symbol of his wealth; outward manifestation



“I don’t want you to get a wrong idea”

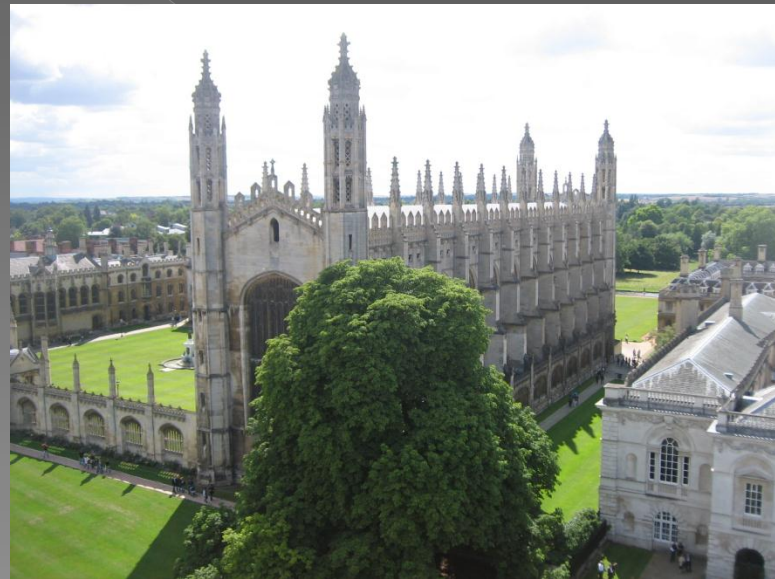
- ◉ “God’s truth”
- ◉ “I am the son of wealthy people in the Middle West – all dead now.”
- ◉ “I was brought up in America but educated at Oxford, because all my ancestors have been educated there”
- ◉ “San Francisco”
- ◉ “My family all died and I came into a good deal of money.”
- ◉ “After that I lived like a young rajah in all the capitals of Europe”

All lies.

- ◉ “With an effort I managed to restrain my incredulous laughter.
- ◉ “...phrases were worn so threadbare that they evoked no image except that of a turbaned ‘character’ leaking sawdust at every pore as he pursued a tiger through the Bois de Boulogne.”
- ◉ Bizarre mixture of truth and fantasy – forces us to withhold final judgment until we can find out more.

Mementoes

- Medal from “Little Montenegro” – “Orderi di Danilo”
- Photo from Oxford – taken in Trinity Quad



I'm going to ask a favor

- “I’m going to make a big request of you today”
- “I didn’t want you to think I was just some nobody.”
- “You’ll hear about it this afternoon.”



Mr. Carraway, Mr. Wolfsheim"

- Meyer Wolfsheim:
based on the
character/real person
of Arnold Rothstein, who
helped "fix" the 1919
World Series



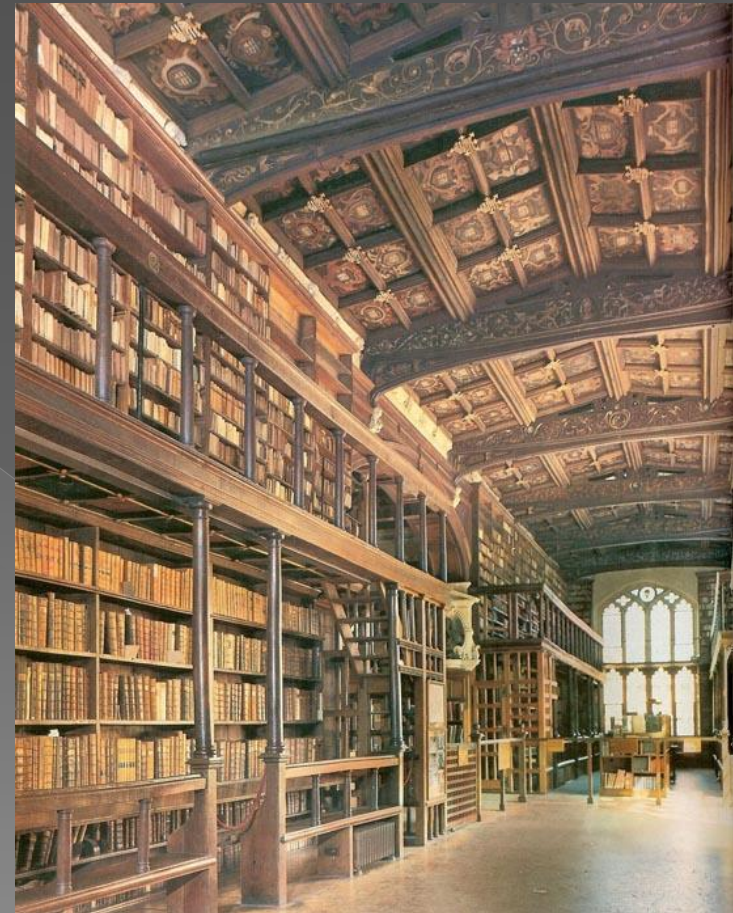
Through Wolfsheim

- Through Meyer Wolfsheim we begin to learn about Gatsby's connections with a shady underworld
- And, we begin to understand where his money comes from
- “Suddenly he looked at his watch, jumped up, and hurried from the room, leaving me with Mr. Wolfsheim ...”



“He’s an Ogggsford man”

- “He went to Ogggsford College in England. You know Ogggsford?”
- “Oxford College” does not exist – It’s Oxford University
- Note: Gatsby is ALWAYS leaving rooms for important and mysterious phone calls.



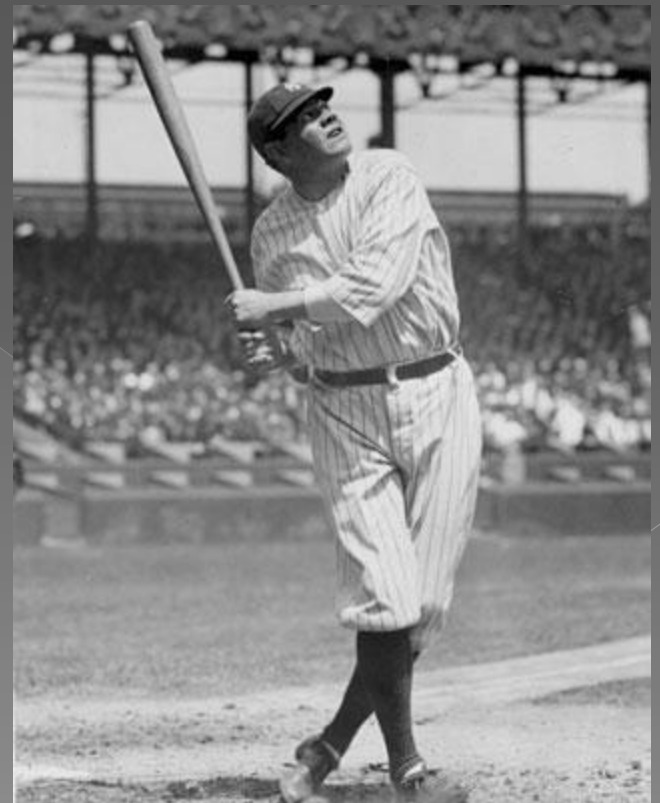
“Looking at my cuff buttons”

- “I see you’re looking at my cuff buttons.”
- Composed of “oddly familiar pieces of ivory”
- “Finest specimens of human molars”



Judging people

- “Yeah, Gatsby’s very careful about women. He would never so much as look at a friend’s wife.”
- Either Wolfsheim is very BAD at judging people, or we’ve got some serious foreshadowing here.
- But, one man could “play with the faith of fifty million people”
- “How did he do that?” “He just saw the opportunity.”



“This is Mr. Gatsby, Mr. Buchanan”



- “They shook hands briefly, and a strained, unfamiliar look of embarrassment came over Gatsby’s face.”
- “I turned toward Mr. Gatsby, but he was no longer there.”

What do we learn at tea?

- ◉ Jordan and Nick have tea at the Plaza Hotel
- ◉ Tone is that of her telling a fairy tale -- the story of a “princess”



The Classic

SANDWICHES AND SAVORIES

Truffled Quail Egg Salad
Maine Lobster, Sturgeon Caviar
Roast Beef, Horseradish
Cucumber, Radish, Basil
Smoked Salmon, Endive

SCONES

Freshly Baked, Warm Seasonal Scones
Double Devonshire Cream, Lemon Curd, Preserves

PASTRIES AND SWEETS

Pâté de Fruit, Sacher Torte, Lemon Tea Cake, Hazelnut Napoleon,
French Macaroons

45

per person

65 per person with choice of Champagne or Sherry
NV, Veuve Clicquot Yellow Label
NV, Perrier-Jouët Grand Brut
NV, Veuve Clicquot, Rose
Dios Baco Oloroso Sherry

The New Yorker

SANDWICHES AND SAVORIES

Cucumber, Radish, Green Herbs
Smoked Salmon, Endive
Roquefort, Shaved Red Grapes, Watercress
Prosciutto, Mozzarella, Pesto
Roast Beef, Horseradish

SCONES

Freshly Baked, Warm Seasonal Scones
Double Devonshire Cream, Lemon Curd, Preserves

PASTRIES AND SWEETS

Black and White Cookies, Raspberry Rugelach, Chocolate Cupcake,
New York Cheesecake, Lemon Tea Cake

45

per person

65 per person with choice of Champagne or Sherry
NV, Veuve Clicquot Yellow Label
NV, Perrier-Jouët Grand Brut
NV, Veuve Clicquot, Rose
Dios Baco Oloroso Sherry

Princess Daisy Fay

- “Largest lawn belonged to Daisy Fay’s house”
- “She was just eighteen ... and the most popular of all the young girls in Louisville”
- “She dressed in white, and had a little roadster”
- “His name was Jay Gatsby”

The day before her wedding

- "...the day before the wedding he gave her a string of pearls valued at three hundred and fifty thousand dollars."
- Daisy gets drunk for the first time
- "Tell 'em all Daisy's change' her mine"



Where have the Buchanans been?

- ◉ Santa Barbara
- ◉ France for a year
- ◉ Cannes
- ◉ Deauville
- ◉ To Chicago to “settle down”



Until now ...



- ◉ Until now Gatsby was a mystery – misunderstood, used, reviled
- ◉ Now, truth is revealed – Desperate yearning for Daisy (think ... youthful love) all symbolized by the green light at the end of Daisy's dock.
- ◉ "I think he half expected her to wander into one of his parties, some night"
- ◉ Gatsby's elaborate plans show us how long he has thought about this moment.

What now?

- ◉ “Does she want to see Gatsby?”
- ◉ “She’s not to know about it ... You’re just supposed to invite her to tea.”

